ELL Reader

Science

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Whale Rescue
at Cape Cod Bay



by Belinda Suarez



Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Nonfiction	• Helping Animals • Pilot Whales • Environment	• Captions • Definitions • Time Line • Labels	• Multiple-Meaning Words

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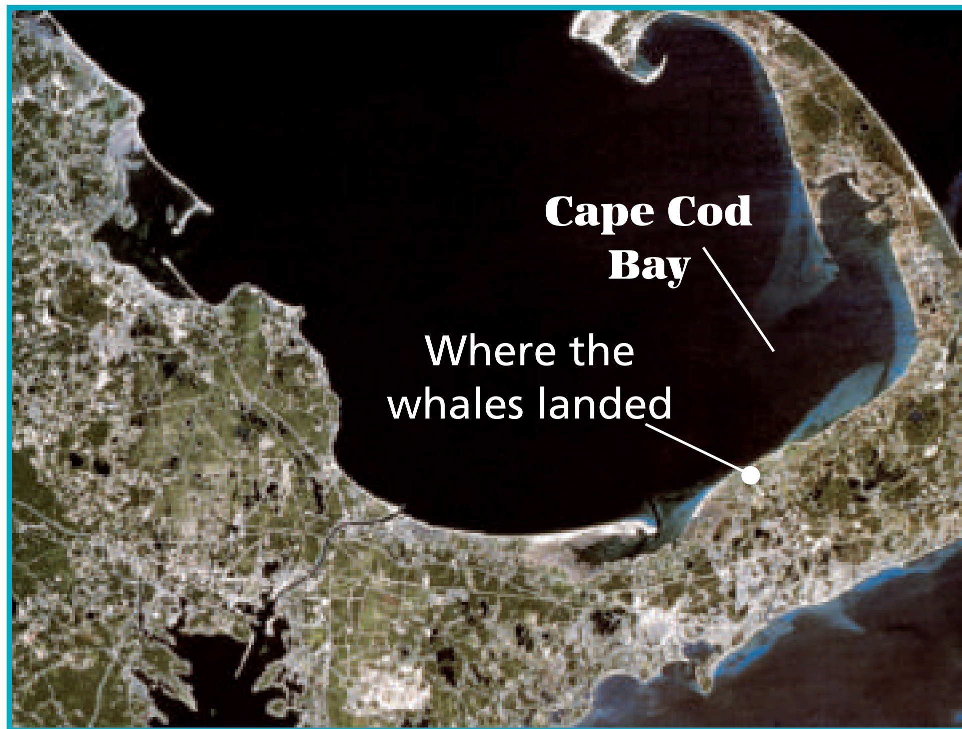
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Whales in Danger

It was July 29, 2002, at 6:30 A.M. The place was Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts.

Fifty-six pilot whales were stranded, or stuck, about a half-mile from the shore. By 10:00 A.M., it was low tide. The whales' bodies were lying on dry ground.



Did You Know? **Ocean Tides**

The tides are the regular rise and fall of ocean water. As the tide comes in toward the shore, ocean water covers more of the beach; this is called *high tide*. Then, for hours, the water level goes down. At *low tide*, water covers less of the beach.





Pilot whales are dark gray or black. They have rounded heads.



Why Were the Whales Stuck?

Nobody knows why the whales swam toward the shore. Maybe they were following a school of squid. Maybe they got lost in the sea channels. Scientists could not explain why the whales were beached at Chapin Memorial Beach.

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school: a large group of fish swimming together

beached: landed on a beach





The Rescue

As soon as people heard about the stranded whales, they drove to the beach. A crowd of almost 2,000 volunteers and rescuers surrounded the whales.

The volunteers started to work. They put wet beach towels and wet sheets over the whales. They had to make sure the whales did not get sunburned.



The two greatest dangers to beached whales are their own weight and a lack of water. If the whales cannot be returned to the water soon, their own weight will crush their organs.



Out of the water, whales can't keep their body at the right temperature. Whales will die if they get too hot.



Adults and children helped the whales.

organs: parts of the body, such as the heart, lungs, and kidneys








Rescuers and volunteers poured water and put wet towels on the whales' skin to keep them cool. Veterinarians and scientists came to examine and help the whales.

When the tide started to rise, the water reached the whales again. By 2:00 P.M., the whales were reviving and beginning to move in the water. The rescuers helped the whales to swim to the ocean.

veterinarians: doctors for animals

reviving: starting to move

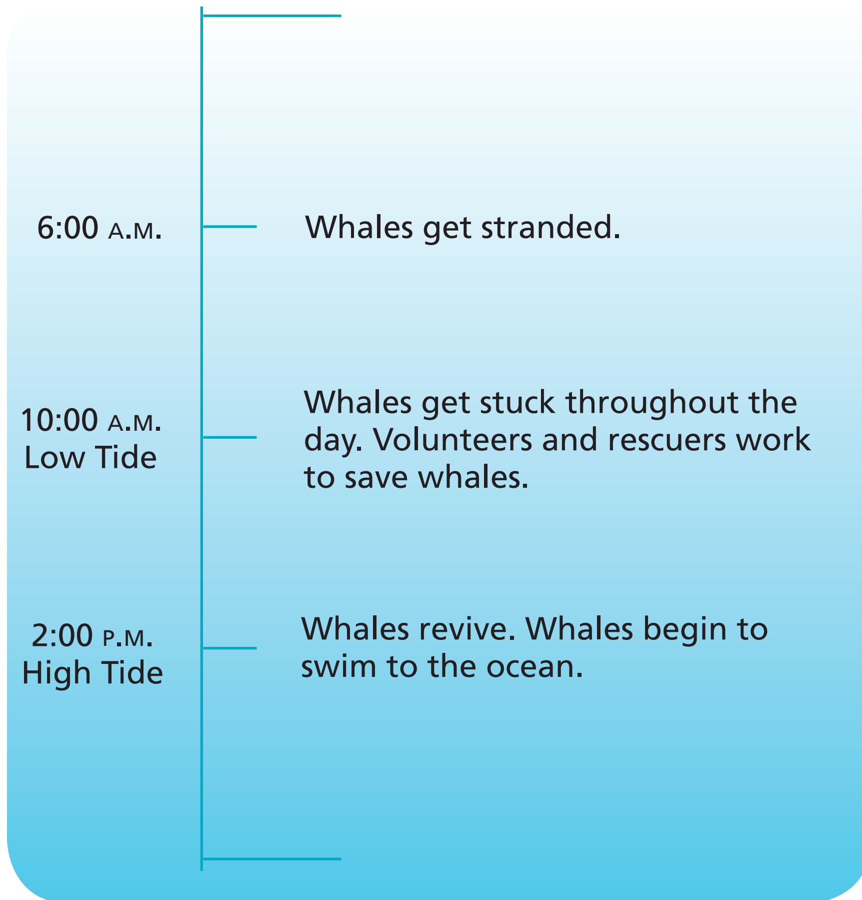




The crowd started to shout when the whales began to move out to sea. Loud noises can scare whales away. The whales needed to swim away, in order to live. The volunteers started to beat drums and yell. They chased the whales away from the shore with boats as well. In the end, 46 whales were saved that day.









Can you retell the sequence of events?



What's Next

Scientists believe that whales sometimes swim toward shore because they are looking for food. Whales like to eat fish that live near the coast.

We can expect that more whales will be stranded in the future. We also can hope that many people will come to help them.





Talk About It

1. What part of the rescue story did you like most?
2. Why do you think the people worked so hard to help beached whales?

Write About It

3. On a separate sheet of paper, write about how children who go with their parents can help stranded whales.

Extend Language

Beach can be a noun or a verb. *Beach,* as a noun, means *a sandy shore. Beach,* as a verb, means to *land* or *run onto the shore. Drive* is another word that can be used as a verb and as a noun. Can you give examples with *drive* as a verb (to drive) and as a noun (a drive)?

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